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JAPAN-US: A MAJOR COMPLICATION HAS ARISEN IN THE OKINAWAN REVERSION NEGOTIATIONS.

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TOKYO HAS INFORMED THE US THAT THE VOICE OF AMERICA (VOA) FACILITIES ON OKINAWA WILL HAVE TO BE REMOVED AFTER REVERSION. THE US HAD PREVIOUSLY INDICATED TO THE JAPANESE THAT IT PLACED THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE VOA OPERATIONS.

A JAPANESE FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT PRIME MINISTER SATO AND FOREIGN MINISTER AICHI CONCURRED IN THE DECISION. BEHIND THE MOVE, ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL, WERE: TRADITIONAL SENSITIVITY AS WELL AS LEGAL PROHIBITIONS AGAINST FOREIGN BROADCASTING FROM JAPANESE SOIL; STRONG OPPOSITION WITHIN THE RULING CONSERVATIVE PARTY AS WELL AS FROM THE OPPOSITION PARTIES TO ANY ATTEMPT TO "RAM THROUGH" CHANGES IN THE BROADCAST LAWS; AND FEAR OF OFFENDING CHINA AT THIS "DELICATE" TIME. THE OFFICIAL CLAIMED THAT ALL OPTIONS HAD BEEN FULLY CONSIDERED, BUT THAT NO FORMULA COULD BE FOUND THAT WOULD NOT CREATE "INSURMOUNTABLE" DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

TOKYO'S STRONG STAND ON THIS ISSUE IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF JAPAN'S GROWING SELF-ASSERTIVENESS IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE US. SATO CLEARLY FEELS THAT HE WOULD BE VULNERABLE POLITICALLY IF HE ACCEDED TO THE US WISHES, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN HE IS TRYING TO SHOW A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH PEKING.

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